

**From:** Logan Harper  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 12/14/01 7:30pm  
**Subject:** Proposed Microsoft Anti-trust Settlement

From my understanding of the proposed settlement, Microsoft is hardly being penalized for their previously uncompetitive maneuvers and even gaining the legal right to maintain its monopoly of the operating systems market. Any penalty that is assessed should not be payable in Microsoft Software any more than printed "Microsoft Dollars" would be a reasonable currency. For mere pennies on the dollar, Microsoft can reduce the fine from millions to a few thousand dollars. For the penalty phase, I would recommend at least several hundred million dollars in levied fines for their cavalier disregard of anti-trust law, payable directly to the US government, with absolutely no PR value for Microsoft, and no forced further integration of Microsoft products in school systems.

The key to breaking the monopoly on Operating Systems is first to allow buyers their choice of operating systems. Previously this choice was heavily discouraged by Microsoft. A remedy to this problem would be to make the choice of an operating system entirely distinct from the hardware--each buyer purchases a computer at a "base price", and any operating system, setup costs, etc. are added to this base price afterwards. In other words, no more package deals. Also, all computer resellers should pay the exact same price for the Microsoft software, regardless of how many other operating systems they offer to consumers.

Another consideration is the proprietary formats that Microsoft has established for programs running solely on its operating system. This can do little but maintain the necessity of their own operating system, and force users to purchase "compatible Microsoft operating systems and programs". A fitting solution to this concern would be to force Microsoft to release the details of the proprietary file formats so closely integrated into their operating system--word, excel, etc. Then, should someone wish to produce an application for another operating system that was compatible with the Microsoft standard files, they would be able to. This would help to make the choice of operating system just that--a choice.

In short, I feel the proposed settlement is little more than a mockery of the anti-trust law that it supposedly upholds. I would like to see a real settlement that would force Microsoft to end their stranglehold on the operating system market, and punish them for maintaining that stranglehold for way too long.

Sincerely,

Logan Harper  
5500 Wabash Ave.  
Terre Haute, IN